Introduction to Rhetoric

The Language of Composition
Chapter 1
Chapter 1 Vocabulary

AUDIENCE:
The person(s) receiving the message

CONTEXT:
The time and place in which a message is given

PURPOSE:
The goal of the writer or speaker

THESIS/CLAIM/ASSERTION:
The main idea of a message

SUBJECT:
The topic of a message

SPEAKER:
The one delivering the message

PERSONA:
The character created by the speaker

ASSUMPTION:
Underlying beliefs

INDUCTION:
Drawing broad conclusions from specific details.
Chapter 1 Vocabulary

COUNTERARGUMENT:
Objections and opposing views to an argument

CONCEDE:
To agree with a part of a counterargument

REFUTE:
To deny the validity of a counterargument

CONNOTATIONS:
Emotions associated with a word

PROPAGANDISTIC:
Emotionally driven text meant to sway opinions

POLEMIC:
An argument against an idea

SATIRIC:
The use of humor to point out flaws and bring change
Rhetoric gets a bad rap.

Rhetoric is the art of ruling the minds of men.

— Plato
Rhetoric:

“The faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion.”

-- Aristotle

Write your own definition.
The Rhetorical Triangle

Speaker

- What does the author know, or think she knows?
- What claim to expertise does she have?
- What beliefs does she hold about the subject?
- What evidence can she provide to support her claims?

Audience

- What does the reader know, or think she knows, about the subject?
- What beliefs does she hold?
- What counterarguments is she likely to make in response to the speaker’s points?

Subject

- Of what is the speaker trying to persuade the audience?
- What relationship do the speaker and audience have?
- What reasons might the audience find the speaker credible, or lacking credibility?
The Rhetorical Triangle

Audience: The recipient(s) of the message

Speaker (Persona): The one delivering the message

Subject (Purpose): The message
Rhetorical Triangle

CONTEXT IS KEY!

The Rhetorical Triangle

Scenario #1: You are trying to convince your friend to go to a party.

Speaker: You (what persona do you create?)

Audience: Your friend

Subject: What is your message?
The Rhetorical Triangle

Scenario #2: You are trying to convince your friend’s parents to let them go to a party.

Speaker: You (what persona do you create?)

Audience: Your friend’s parents

Subject: What is your message?
Lou Gehrig’s Speech

Who is the speaker?
Who is the audience?
What is the message?

Is it effective? What makes it effective?
Lou Gehrig’s Speech

Who is the speaker? Lou Gehrig

Who is the audience? Baseball Fans

What is the message? “I’ve had a bad break, but I have a lot to live for.”

Is it effective? What makes it effective?
What makes Lou Gehrig’s Speech Effective?

- Gehrig has **credibility** as a player and American icon.
- Gehrig supports his message with **facts and logic**.
- Gehrig has an **emotional connection** with his audience.
Rhetorical Appeals

Logos: logical ideas supported by facts

Ethos: credibility & trustworthiness coming from shared values

Pathos: emotional connection with the audience
Examples of Logos

- Rational, logical ideas
- Details, facts
- Statistical data, case studies
Examples of Ethos

- Speaker’s expertise
- Credibility of other experts
- Shared values with audience
- Celebrity endorsements

Credibility ≠ Reliability
Examples of Pathos

- Emotive language (connotation)
- Figurative language
- Personal anecdotes
Rhetorical Appeals

**Logos:** logical ideas supported by facts

**Ethos:** credibility & trustworthiness coming from shared values

**Pathos:** emotional connection with the audience
Rhetorical Appeals in Practice

Read the Lou Gehrig Speech again.

Highlight examples of Logos, Ethos, and Pathos in different colors.
Any Questions?
Rhetorical Appeals in Practice

Read the Jody Heymann piece.

Highlight Appeals to Logos, Ethos, and Pathos in different colors.
Rhetoric in Practice: Assignment

● Read the correspondence between Phyllis Wright & Albert Einstein.
● Identify the subject, speaker, audience, context, and purpose
● Highlight Appeals to Logos, Ethos, and Pathos

How rhetorically effective is Einstein’s response?
Visual Rhetoric
The same strategies apply to visual rhetoric as apply to written or spoken rhetoric. visual rhetoric

Visual Rhetoric often relies on the use of satire as well.
What rhetorical appeals are used in this ad?
What rhetorical appeals are used in this ad?
What rhetorical appeals are used in this ad?
1960

These grades are terrible!!

2010

These grades are terrible!!
Our Education System

Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.
A Few Words about Satire...

“A sort of glass (mirror) wherein beholders do generally discover everyone’s face but their own.”

- Relies on humor, wit, irony, parody… shows how absurd something is.
- Points out flaws and absurdities in society and politics.

Example: A Modest Porpoisal
Review...

1. Identify the Speaker, Audience, Message, & Context
2. Evaluate the effectiveness by identifying appeals to Logos, Ethos, & Pathos
3. These apply to both written/spoken and visual texts
Structuring an Argument

Aristotle-Style
The Classical Model

1. Introduction: introduces the subject
2. Narration: provides context
3. Confirmation: makes the argument
4. Refutation: addresses counterarguments
5. Conclusion: answers the “so what?”
Read “Not by Math Alone” and identify the five parts of the Classical Model.
Patterns of Development
Narration

Tells a story to make a point

- Testimonial
- Parable / Fable

Relies on the credibility of the speaker and the relatability of the story.
The Tortoise and the Hare
Description

Uses sensory details to illustrate a point.

- Narrative Essays

Used in conjunction with narration to make the narrative more relatable.
Of Mice and Men
Process Analysis

Explains how something works or how something should be done.

- Instruction Manuals
- Scientific Process

Relies on clarity of explanation.
How to never turn the page by yourself again.
Exemplification

Provides examples to make an abstract idea more concrete.

- Case studies
- Narratives

Relies on relevant, credible examples to make the point.
Comparison & Contrast

Uses similarities and differences between two things to make a point.

- Comparison of Wholes
- Comparison of Parts

Relies on a **strong connection** between the things being compared.
Classification & Division

Create categories, and then place objects/ideas into the appropriate categories.

Relies on clearly defined categories.
Definition

Explaining exactly what is meant by a term or concept.

- Introduction to an Argument

It is crucial that arguing parties agree on the vocabulary being used in the argument.
My Thesis on Singin’ in the Rain.
Cause & Effect

Argues that A caused B; change A to get B

- Civil Rights Speeches
- Environmental Reports

Relies on clear logic and chain of events.
Rhetoric In Practice

Reread “We Can Afford to Give Parents a Break” and make note of the patterns of development the author uses. Which of these patterns prevails in the overall essay? Which ones does she use in specific sections or paragraphs?
When Rhetoric Misses the Mark
A breakdown in the rhetorical triangle
An imbalance of logos, ethos, & pathos
Know your audience. Know your purpose.
Assignment:

Follow the directions on page 28 as you read the passages on pages 29 - 34.